If in addition to that you want another, one nearer Trivandrum, we will consider its possibility and I might let you into the secret that the matter is at present under investigation by the Ayurveda Department.

MEMBER: I spoke about loans on the line of the agricultural loans.

DEWAN: I am afraid the system of loans given for the encouragement of agriculture and industry hardly lends itself to Ayurvedic institutions.

54. Defects of the present system of education.

MR. A. PARAMESWARAN NAIR (*Member, Municipal Council, Neyyattinkara*) expressed his gratification that the Government had recognised the need for reforming the present system of education and pointed out that every Rupee spent in the cause of education, as it was at present, was only feeding the fire of unemployment.

The development of the vernacular was the burning question of the day in India. The idea was steadily gaining ground that the language of the court and the language of the land should be the same and that the language of the land should be assigned a prominent place in the scheme of public instruction. No Government which cared for the well-being of its people would scoff at this idea. But so far as Travancore was concerned, the educational authorities were till recently according a kind of step-motherly treatment to the vernaculars. It was probably unwise to expect a better attitude from a set of foreigners who had no acquaintance whatever with the land or its languages. In this matter, the present administration had given evidence of commendable prudence by respecting the wishes of the people and appointing an Indian to the post of Director of Public Instruction. It was absolutely necessary that instruction should be imparted to pupils in their mother tongue and English be taught as a compulsory second language. Travancore boys should learn English because it was one of the most widely-spoken languages of the world, but there was no meaning in the claim that instruction should be imparted to them in this language alone. The teaching of Hindi could be made compulsory even in primary schools. It was unwise to think that Travancore could lead a self-contained and isolated life. The wide continent of India was offering an extensive field for any one in search of a means of livelihood. For thriving in this great field, a knowledge of Hindi was indispensable. In this matter Travancore could with advantage imitate her neighbour, Cochin.

Aversion to manual labour was one of the greatest evils engendered by the present system of education. Love of comfort was the dominant feeling in every pupil. Hence Sirkar Service was their supreme goal and ambition. This mentality could be altered in two ways, namely, by giving prominence to practical education in schools, and by making the work of Government officers more burdensome. Some of the attractions of Government service could also be transmitted to other occupations by means of new labour laws. It should besides be

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made obligatory for every pupil when he completed the high school course to secure a certificate of competency in some profession which he could take up in after-life.

The following were a few other ways in which the present system of education could be reformed. In order to prevent the growth of unemployment among holders of University degrees, admissions to the college classes should be restricted. The period of school and collegiate education should be reduced. The period of general education, including the college courses, could be safely restricted to twelve years. Vernacular middle schools and high schools should be amalgamated with English schools. Practical education should be imparted both in primary and secondary schools. This suggestion would call back into memory the resolution adopted by the Legislative Council some time back, as a result of which spinning was introduced as a subject of study in some schools. But nobody was paying any attention to it now. Instead of boys, spiders were now working on the charkas. Manual labour was galling as much to the boys as to their teachers. This mentality should disappear and the mud in the fields should smell like sweet scent in the nostrils of our educated young men before Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, would reign in this land of agriculture.

The first thing that was wanted for reaching this consummation was to have a set of teachers competent to infuse this spirit into their pupils. The so-called teachers' training schools of today should be either closed down or radically reformed. Teachers should be trained not only in pedagogy but also in agriculture, hygiene, co-operation, banking and political economy. Such teachers would alone be competent to be the apostles of cultural and technical education in the provinces to which they were sent. No person who had not undergone training in a recognised institution should be allowed to be a teacher. If practical training was essential to a vakil, a physician or an engineer, it was equally essential to a pedagogue.

The physical deterioration of present day pupils as a consequence of the system of education was simply appalling. Multiplicity of text-books, severity of examinations, and bad climatic conditions combined with unwholesome surroundings had brought about this result. It was reported that the majority of pupils were stricken with diseases. Hookworm, tuberculosis and leprosy had taken hold of many. It was regrettable that Government though devoting considerable attention to public health matters had failed to appoint a permanent body of medical men in order to render the necessary medical aid to pupils.

The neglect of physical training in schools and colleges was another cause of the distressing physical condition of the pupils of today. Government should therefore anxiously consider the desirability of introducing compulsory military training in all secondary schools and colleges.

Another cause of physical deterioration was the ignorance of the masses in matters relating to hygiene and sanitation. Lessons in

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hygiene, first aid etc., should be taught in all schools. Able and efficient teachers should also be deputed to rural areas for delivering public lectures on these subjects with the aid of magic lantern exhibition.

The policy of unnecessarily multiplying the number of text-books should be mercilessly discouraged. The works of the great Malayalam poets like Ezhuthatchan, Cherusseri, Kottayathu Tampuran and others were conspicuous by their absence among the modern text books. The selection of text-books should be guided not by a commercial mind but by an instinct for mental culture. Bad and immoral books should be banished from schools. Simple primers on agriculture, co-operation, hygiene and physical science should be given a prominent place among text-books.

Howsoever well Government might reform the Education Department, the success of the reform depended upon the officers who administered the department. The inspecting officers appointed by Government should be efficient and capable men, and above all, men of sterling character. No one should be appointed as an Inspector of Schools who was not proficient in the language of the land. The number of Assistant Inspectors should be reduced.

A number of schools which had only a nominal existence could be abolished. Several others could be amalgamated without loss of efficiency. The new Director of Public Instruction should examine the question very carefully. He could be convinced of the feasibility of abolishing many schools in the Neyyattinkara taluk, for instance, if he would take up the matter in the course of one of his inspections.

A committee of experts should be appointed under the presidency of the Director of Public Instruction to examine and report upon the various phases of the problem of educational reform in the State.

Government should extend their generous help to mofussil libraries and reading rooms.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Paramesvaran Nair, I will begin with your last subject, one that is not mentioned in your list of subjects, that is, the question of literary vernacular libraries. I think it is an excellent idea. But whether it will be possible to carry it out without very large expense is a question that needs investigation. However, I shall discuss the matter with the Director of Public Instruction and, if found necessary, adopt means for finding out what the general public wish in the matter and then we can see whether sufficient funds can be found either by direct assistance by the Government or by indirect assistance. It is an important subject and requires to be thoroughly investigated. At any rate you will have the satisfaction of having initiated the move and advocated its cause.

The next subject is the choice of text-books. That certainly is a very difficult matter and so much depends on text-books chosen for the formation of character, and development of thought and the general

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benefits of education. All these are closely associated with the selection of text-books. It is an important matter and it is receiving closer and closer attention each succeeding year. I hope as each year passes by you will find an improvement in the choice of text-books.

The need for adopting the vernacular as the medium of instruction, I think, is practically universal so far as education up to the III or IV Forms goes. There is many a III Form child I have spoken to whose knowledge of English is so very limited as to call for no further proof that education is conducted through the medium of the vernacular.

As regards practical training, you will see what I said at the end of the last paragraph but one of my address to the Assembly *i. e.*, paragraph 22 which closes thus :

"The Education Department is busy with the consideration of some important reforms including the giving of a practical turn to the instruction now imparted in schools."

The Assembly adjourned for lunch at about 2 P. M. and re-assembled at 3 P. M.

55. Educational reforms.

MR. A. V. PADMANABHA IYER (*Member, Municipal Council, Haripad*) speaking on the choice of text books in schools said that according to the present curricula of studies, geography had to be taught in the First and Second Forms in the vernacular. Instead of this it should be allowed to teach geographical terms in English, the explanations and the comments being given in the vernacular. Again the portion prescribed for Form II was Asia and Europe. But in order to learn this portion, pupils had to buy two separate books, one dealing with Asia and Africa and the other with Europe. This was waste of money. The standard of the books was also comparatively high.

In regard to vernacular text books, the following were the books prescribed for the various classes beginning from the Preparatory Class.

Preparatory Class. വനജാക്ഷി,
ശേഷയ്യാശാസ്ത്രി,
ലഘുരാമായണം,
ചരിത്രപ്രവേശം,
ഇൻഡ്യാചരിത്രനായകന്മാർ.

Of these, the first was too high for the class..

Form I. പള്ളിമഞ്ജരി,
ജാജ്ജ്സ്റ്റീവൺസൻ,
ജീവിതരീതി,
ചരിത്രനായകന്മാർ,
ചരിത്രപ്രവേശകം.

Frm II. രാമാശ്വമേധം,
പുരാണരംഗം,
സന്മാർഗ്ഗപാഠം,
ഗ്രന്ഥസമക്ഷം,

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